

Adopted: 10/08/14 Effective: 10/27/14

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL Snohomish County, Washington

AMENDED ORDINANCE NO. 14-073

RELATING TO GROWTH MANAGEMENT, AMENDING CHAPTER 30.25 AND SECTIONS 30.23.210, 30.41F.040, 30.42A.100, 30.42B.020, 30.85.090, AND 30.85.130 OF THE SNOHOMISH COUNTY CODE TO MODIFY GENERAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FOR LANDSCAPING INCLUDING TREE CANOPY REQUIREMENTS

WHEREAS, on January 21, 2009, the Snohomish County Council adopted Amended Ordinance No. 08-101, adding tree replacement requirements in section 30.25.016 of the Snohomish County Code (SCC) requiring retention or replacement of 100 percent of significant trees; and

WHEREAS, some concerns about the difficulty of planting of all the required replacement trees onsite may be addressed by limiting the number of required replacement trees, clarifying when replacement trees must be planted on site, and providing options for replacing trees when they cannot be reasonably accommodated on site; and

WHEREAS, the Snohomish County Hearing Examiner's Annual Report dated December 2013 recognizes that no options for flexibility or deviation from requirements are in place for existing sites heavily forested with significant trees. The report states that current regulations may impede development of such sites and recommends re-examination of the tree retention policy and code; and

WHEREAS, the International Society of Arboriculture Guidelines for Developing and Evaluating Tree Ordinances recommend jurisdictions regulate tree canopy coverage rather than individual trees: and

WHEREAS, tree canopy within landscaping mitigates impacts associated with residential development consistent with planned urban densities, protects the character of existing neighborhoods, provides protection of understory plants, filters sunlight, promotes community aesthetics, creates walkable neighborhoods, and creates a sense of place; and

WHEREAS, the Snohomish County Planning Commission ("Planning Commission") held a public hearing on March 25, 2014, to receive public testimony concerning the code amendments contained in this ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Snohomish County Planning Commission held a special session for continued deliberation of the proposed amendments on April 8, 2014; and

WHEREAS, at the conclusion of the Planning Commission's deliberation, the Planning Commission did not make a recommendation on the code amendments contained in the ordinance, as indicated in its recommendation letter dated May 27, 2014; and

allowing them to blend into the neighborhood, helps to define outdoor spaces and increases privacy as well as visually softening corners of structures and lots. These attributes of tree canopy mitigate the impacts of urban residential development on neighboring development and helps preserve the character of existing neighborhoods.

G. A high-level GIS analysis of the Best Available Land Cover Data provided by the US Geologic Service, determined the unincorporated urban growth areas of Snohomish County contain an estimated 30 percent canopy coverage between public and private lands.

- H. This ordinance seeks to maintain 30 percent canopy coverage in unincorporated urban areas of Snohomish County through retention and replacement of existing tree canopy and significant trees and with supplemental plantings if needed on all residential sites within landscaped areas while providing flexible options for developers to obtain urban densities as prescribed within the Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan.
- I. Under the existing urban residential landscaping code, residential developments are required to dedicate a minimum 10 percent of their gross site area to landscaping. Beta-testing of the proposed code amendments on current landscaping plans resulted in most developments meeting or exceeding proposed canopy requirements through tree retention and planting within these already required landscaped areas. Beta-testing further indicated that modifying proposed landscape plans to reduce required trees and healthy spacing placement would not reduce the applicant's ability to obtain the proposed canopy requirements.
- J. In addition to maintaining the aesthetic natural character of 30 percent tree canopy in urban growth areas, Snohomish County recognizes the multiple functions of tree canopy within landscaped areas in the urban environment, including providing habitat for urban wildlife, improving air quality, providing a buffer for noise, reducing urban heat island effects, providing a reservoir for Carbon sequestration, reducing soil erosion by providing vegetated areas to reduce stormwater run-off, and providing filtration of on-site surface water prior to re-entry to the County's waterways.
- K. Since parcels differ in topography and existing canopy coverage and proposed development applications differ in density and size, the regulations include a sliding scale for gross site tree canopy coverage that will conserve the treed character of the unincorporated urban growth areas while maximizing planned urban densities.
- L. Development applications within unincorporated urban growth areas of less than seven lots are not required to provide open space under the Urban Residential Design Standards (URDS). Tree canopy will provide the mitigation for aesthetic compatibility that otherwise would have been provided through common open space.
- M. Current scientific research in the United States and Canada supports using a mix of different species when placing trees into landscaping in order to increase the tree canopy's resistance to pest or pathogen infestation. Research has also found that including species from an adjacent planting zone in the canopy mix increases the survivability factor of the tree canopy in the case of future climate uncertainty.
- N. Written testimony provided to the Snohomish County Planning Commission by the development community stated that the existing regulations have inhibited urban development and frustrated achievement of the GMA goal to accommodate projected

DP-5, which reads, in part: "The County and cities shall adopt comprehensive plans and development regulations (RCW 36.70A.040). In Urban Growth Areas (UGAs), such plans and regulations shall:

- (a) Achieve urban uses and densities;
- (b) Provide for urban governmental services and capital facilities sufficient to accommodate the broad range of needs and uses that will accompany the projected urban growth; and
- (c) Permit the urban growth that is projected to occur in the succeeding twenty-year period (RCW 36.70A.110(2))."

DP-11 "The County and cities should revise development regulations and incentives, as appropriate, to encourage higher residential densities and greater employment concentrations in Urban Growth Areas."

R. This ordinance complies with and implements the following Snohomish County Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan (GMA CP) General Policy Plan (GPP) goals, objectives, and policies by providing options for calculating existing canopy and providing incentives to retain existing trees which will ease restrictions on forested sites within urban growth areas, requiring landscaping standards that will maintain the natural aesthetic character of forest canopy within urban growth areas, and by providing flexible options for obtaining canopy requirements within landscaping that will better achieve prescribed urban densities prescribed within the Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan:

Goal LU 1 "Establish and maintain compact, clearly defined, well designed UGAs."

Goal LU 2 "Establish development patterns that use urban land more efficiently."

Objective LU 2.B "Plan for future land use and development patterns that are consistent with countywide and regional planning policies and that complement and support the future transportation system outlined in the Transportation Element."

Policy LU 2.B.2 "The county shall encourage, and may require, higher minimum densities within designated urban centers, urban villages, and along connecting transit emphasis corridors to support planned transit service."

Policy LU 4.B.2, which reads, in part: "The county shall explore and consider design guidelines for urban centers and villages that achieve the following objectives:

(j) Well designed urban centers and urban villages that are sensitive to natural and cultural resources so as to preserve them."

Goal LU 5 "Encourage land use patterns that create connected, identifiable neighborhoods and communities in UGAs through a consolidated system of past and future neighborhood plans."

- 5. The Washington State Attorney General last issued an advisory memorandum, as required by RCW 36.70A.370, in December of 2006 entitled "Advisory Memorandum: Avoiding Unconstitutional Takings of Private Property" to help local governments avoid the unconstitutional taking of private property. The process outlined in the State Attorney General's 2006 advisory memorandum was used by Snohomish County in objectively evaluating the regulatory changes proposed by this ordinance.
- T. This ordinance is consistent with the record.
 - This ordinance repeals regulation of individual significant trees and amends Chapter 30.25 SCC to include regulations of the overall site tree canopy, applying consistent landscaping requirements to similar types of residential development within urban growth areas of Snohomish County to mitigate the impacts of achieving planned urban densities and maintaining the character of existing neighborhoods.
 - This ordinance provides flexibility for developers to obtain the required site tree canopy percentages by applying a sliding scale for requirements based on proposed density and development type while offering incentives to retain significant trees.

Section 2. The County Council makes the following conclusions:

- A. This ordinance is necessary to remedy the competing goals of tree retention and obtaining planned densities within urban growth areas of Snohomish County.
- B. The proposal is consistent with the goals, objectives and policies of the GPP.
- C. The proposal is consistent with Washington State law and the SCC.
- D. The County has complied with all SEPA requirements in respect to this non-project action.
- E. The regulations proposed by this ordinance do not result in an unconstitutional taking of private property for a public purpose.
- **Section 3.** The Snohomish County Council bases its findings and conclusions on the entire record of the county council, including all testimony and exhibits. Any finding, which should be deemed a conclusion, and any conclusion which should be deemed a finding, is hereby adopted as such.
- **Section 4.** Snohomish County Code Section 30.23.210, last amended by Amended Ordinance No. 13-042 on July 10, 2013, is amended to read:

30.23.210 Lot size averaging.

(1) A subdivision or short subdivision will meet the minimum lot area of the zone in which it is located if the area in lots plus <u>half of the area of all</u> critical areas and their buffers <u>that must be permanently protected under chapter 30.62A SCC, if any, plus</u> and areas designated as open space or recreational uses, if any, divided by the total number of lots equals or exceeds the minimum lot area of the zone in which the property is located. In no case shall the density achieved be greater than the gross site area divided by the underlying zoning.

- (a) Enhance neighborhood livability and mitigate potential land use incompatibility through landscaping and screening and by conserving tree canopy and vegetation;
- (b) ((Reduce tree loss during land development and construction)) Encourage the conservation of the urban tree canopy and significant trees to retain the county's urban aesthetic character and environment; and
- (c) ((Mitigate tree loss by providing for tree replacement.)) Promote the preservation of open space, existing tree canopy and vegetation, and natural diversity and wildlife habitat, using supplemental plantings when necessary.
- (2) The provisions of this chapter should enhance compatibility between uses and zones and build continuity within neighborhoods while reducing the impacts of new development and minimizing the visual impact of parking areas and detention facilities and other special uses that require screening from residential uses.
- **Section 6.** Snohomish County Code Section 30.25.012, added by Amended Ordinance No. 08-101 on January 21, 2009, is amended to read:

30.25.012 Applicability.

- (1) The landscaping provisions of this chapter shall apply to all development ((permits)) applications, unless specifically exempted in SCC (($\frac{30.25.012(3)}{2}$))) $\frac{30.25.012(2)}{2}$ or elsewhere in this chapter.
- (((2) The tree retention and replacement provisions of this chapter shall apply to all new residential development activity within urban growth areas and as required in SCC 30.25.025, 30.25.030 and 30.25.032, including any activity requiring a grading or other land-disturbing activity permit, unless specifically exempted.))
 - (((3))) (2) This chapter shall not apply to:
 - (a) Farms and accessory uses associated with farming;
- (b) Changes in occupancy where the use would generate a need for five or less additional parking spaces over the number of existing spaces; and
- (c) Remodels of ((multiple family)) or additions to residential, commercial, industrial, public facilities and private institutional uses representing less than 50 percent of the valuation of the structure as determined by using the most recent ICBO construction tables, or adding less than 20 percent of gross floor area.
- Section 7. A new section is added to chapter 30.25 of the Snohomish County Code to read:
- 30.25.013 Allowing A Complete Development Application to Opt-in to the requirements of Ordinance No. 14-073.
- (1) An applicant with a residential development application within unincorporated urban growth areas, determined to be complete between April 21, 2009, and the effective date of Ordinance 14-073, may voluntarily submit a signed waiver to the department requesting the development application be reviewed under the provisions in Amended Ordinance No. 14-073. All other development regulations in effect as of the date the original development application was determined to be complete shall apply.
- (2) Applicants submitting a signed waiver shall have 12 months from the effective date of Amended Ordinance 14-073 to submit a revised site plan and landscaping plan.
- (3) Residential site and landscaping plans re-submitted under this section shall require public notice pursuant to chapter 30.70 SCC and any applicable fees.

- irrigation is required to maintain the proposed landscaping in a healthy condition.
- (d) Street trees and other right-of-way planting shall be shown on the approved landscaping
- (e) The landscaping plan shall include the location, caliper and species of all significant trees located on the site that are proposed to be removed.
- (f) The landscaping plan shall include the location, caliper or height, and species of all replacement trees to be planted.
- (a) The landscaping plan shall include a description of why significant trees cannot or should not be retained.
- (h) The landscaping plan shall include a description and approximate location of any trees on adjoining properties that may be directly affected by any proposed activities.
- (i) The landscaping plan shall show clearing limits consistent with applicable land disturbing activity site plans required pursuant to chapter 30.63B-SCC.))
- (3) Planting areas outside of the right-of-way may include landscape features such as decorative paving, sculptures, fountains, rock features, benches, picnic tables, and other amenities; provided that the area devoted to such features may count toward no more than 20 percent of the total required perimeter and parking lot landscaping area. Use of bark, mulch, gravel, and similar non-vegetative material shall be minimized and used only to assist plant growth and maintenance or to visually complement plant material.
- (4) An accessible route of travel meeting construction code barrier free requirements may cross a required landscape area at a 90 degree angle or as close to a 90 degree angle to the road right-of-way as conditions allow. The area devoted to an accessible route of travel in a required perimeter area may be included to satisfy the requirements of SCC 30.25.020.
- (5) The following minimum planting standards apply, except that street trees required pursuant to SCC 30,25.015(8) shall comply with planting standards in the EDDS:
- (a) Evergreen and deciduous trees shall be at least ((eight)) six feet high at the time of planting:
- (b) Deciduous trees shall have a minimum diameter of one and one-half inches caliper at the time of planting; provided that the combined diameter measurements of groupings of understory trees, such as vine maples, may be used to meet this requirement;
 - (c) Evergreen and deciduous shrubs shall be at least 18 inches high at the time of planting;
- (d) Trees shall be of a size and type projected to reach a height of at least 20 feet in 10 years, except where under-story or low-growing trees are specifically approved or required by the director:
- (e) Trees shall be planted at least five feet from adjoining property lines ((, except as may be approved for landscaping along road frontages pursuant to the EDDS and road frontage requirements)).
- (6) All landscape materials shall meet or exceed current United States standards for nursery stock published by the American Nursery and Landscape Association and consist of native species. The applicant shall use a list of acceptable species prepared by the director or may substitute a species with similar characteristics not on the list with the director's approval.
- (7) To promote stabilization and continued healthy growth of the landscape areas required by this section, a qualified landscape designer shall determine the need for irrigation. An irrigation plan shall be submitted together with the required landscape plan.
- (8) Street trees are required to be planted as frontage improvements along public ((and private)) roads and along private roads and drive aisles in residential developments within urban growth areas ((on land developed for residential use according to the road cross section and general landscaping standards of the EDDS)). Street trees are not required around turnarounds at the end of ((reads)) road network elements less than 150 feet in length.

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perimeter landscaping, site landscaping, critical area protection areas and required buffers, and

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open space tracts or easements.

((Table 30.25.016(3) - Tree Replacement Schedule

Caliper of Tree Removal	Number of Replacement Trees Required
10 16 inches	4
16.1 - 24 inches	2
Over 24 inches	3

Notes: Multiple stem trees shall be counted as one significant tree.))

Table 30.25.016(4)

Measuring Tree Canopy

Existing Canopy		New Canopy		
Option 1 Tree Survey	Option 2 Aerial Estimation	20-Year Canopy Calculation		
 Measure average canopy radius (r) for each tree to be retained Calculate existing canopy area using the formula: Canopy Area (CA)=πr² Total the sum of tree canopy areas and divide by gross site area to obtain canopy coverage percentage 	Obtain aerial imagery of site Measure site boundaries Measure canopies of individual trees or stand area using leading edges as the forest boundary Divide total canopy measurement by the gross site area to obtain canopy coverage percentage	 For each proposed species: Calculate radius (r) of canopy at 20 years maturity Calculate canopy coverage using the formula: CA=πr² Multiply by the proposed quantity to be planted to obtain total species canopy area Total the sum of species canopy area for all proposed species and divide by gross site area to obtain 20-year canopy coverage percentage 		

(((5) The number of required replacement trees shall be reduced by 30%-if an additional buffer of 15 feet is provided around the edge of a subdivision and all significant trees and native understory in the buffer are retained. This buffer must be in addition to all buffer and landscaping requirements in the code, and it must be provided around the entire subdivision except where roads and other required infrastructure enter the subdivision.))

(((6))) (5) To assist in the preservation and retention of significant trees <u>and existing tree</u> <u>canopy outside of critical area protection areas and required buffers and perimeter landscaping</u>, the ((director)) <u>applicant</u> may ((apply one of)) <u>utilize</u> the following ((incentives)) <u>credits</u>:

- (a) ((The on-site recreation space required by SCC-30.23A.080 may be reduced by up to 10 percent when at least 10 percent of site's significant trees (outside of any required perimeter landscaping or critical area protection areas and required buffers) are retained;)) Individual significant trees retained on site shall be counted at 125 percent of their actual canopy area.
- (b) ((The lot width or size may be reduced by up to 20 percent of that required by the underlying zone when at least 10 percent of the site's significant trees (outside of any required

(((e))) (e) Replacement trees shall be located in such a manner to minimize damage to trees or ((dwellings)) structures on the project site and on properties adjoining the project site ((;and))

- (((d) Significant evergreen trees proposed for removal must be replaced with a comparable evergreen native species as determined by the director.))
- (((8))) (7) The following tree protection measures shall be taken during clearing or construction:
- (a) Tree protective fencing shall be installed along the outer edge of the drip line surrounding the ((significant)) trees retained in order to protect the trees during any land disturbance activities, and fencing shall not be moved to facilitate grading or other construction activity within the protected area;
- (b) Tree protective fencing shall be a minimum height of three feet, visible and of durable construction; orange polyethylene laminar fencing is acceptable; and
 - (c) Signs must be posted on the fence reading "Tree Protection Area."
- (((9)))(8) ((The Director)) An applicant may reduce the tree canopy requirements of SCC Table 30.25.016(3) by no more than five percent through a landscape modification when all of the following criteria and those in SCC 30.25.040 are met:
- (a) The applicant demonstrates in writing that they have made a good faith effort to comply with the tree canopy requirements within the physical constraints of the site by:
- (i) Retaining as much of the tree canopy as possible on site consistent with best management practices for maintaining the health of trees; or
- (ii) Replanting as much of the tree canopy as possible on site consistent with best management practices for maintaining the health of trees;
- (b) The applicant proposes to plant additional understory vegetation or ground cover area, excluding lawn cover, invasive species or noxious weeds, to fulfill the remaining canopy requirement in SCC Table 30.25.016(3) not met by retention or replanting of tree canopy; and
- (c) When critical areas protection area buffers exist on site and those buffers are not highly functioning, the applicant proposes to enhance the buffers by removing invasive species and noxious weeds and/or planting vegetation indigenous to the Pacific Northwest, spaced for maximum survivability.
- (9) On sites without any existing tree canopy, the director may reduce the requirements of SCC Table 30.26.016(3) by no more than five percentage points (for example, 30 percent requirement can be reduced to 25 percent) when an applicant provides a 25 percent increase in the area of open space than that required under SCC Table 30.23A.080(2). The following shall not be eligible for this reduction:
 - (a) Short subdivisions less than seven lots;
- (b) Single family detached units, cottage housing, townhouse, multi-family less than 10 units; and
 - (c) Urban center development.

- (((0)))(10) The ((director)) <u>County Engineer</u> may ((allow a modification to the design of)) <u>modify</u> required frontage improvements to retain significant trees as street trees.
- (11) Retained significant trees, trees planted as replacements for significant trees, and trees planted to meet requirements in SCC 30.25.016(3) may not be removed except when determined in writing by a certified arborist to constitute a hazard. Any replacement or significant trees removed without proper documentation from a certified arborist shall be subject to a fine as determined under chapter 30.85 SCC.
- (12) Any significant trees identified in a landscape plan to be retained and subsequently damaged or removed during site development shall be replaced at a rate of three trees for each

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The hearing examiner may approve a rezone only when all the following criteria are met:

- (1) The proposal is consistent with the comprehensive plan:
 - (2) The proposal bears a substantial relationship to the public health, safety, and welfare; and
- (((3) The proposal would not increase the allowed density of residential development on any site where any significant trees other than hazardous trees were removed after January 7, 2009. and within six years prior to the date of the submission of the application, pursuant to SCC 30.25.016(3); and))
- (((4))) (3) Where applicable, minimum zoning criteria found in chapters 30.31A through 30.31F SCC are met.

Section 13. Snohomish County Code Section 30.42B.020, last amended by Amended Ordinance No. 10-072 on September 8, 2010, is amended to read:

30.42B.020 Applicability.

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- (1) A PRD is permitted only within UGAs in the R-9.600, R-8.400, R-7.200, LDMR, and MR zones.
- (2) A retirement apartment or retirement housing PRD is permitted only within the LDMR, MR. NB. PCB. CB. and GC zones.
- (3) A PRD is not permitted in the rural area, except in the R-5 zone when consistent with Policy LU 6.A.3 of the comprehensive plan.
- (((4) A PRD is not permitted on any site where any significant trees other than hazardous trees were removed after January-7, 2009, and within six years prior to the date of the submission of the application, pursuant to SCC 30.25.016(3),))
- (((5))) (4) Except for the retirement apartment and retirement housing PRDs, the density of a PRD shall be consistent with the land use designation identified in the comprehensive plan.
- Section 14. Snohomish County Code Section 30.85.090, last amended by Amended Ordinance No. 08-101 on January 21, 2009, is amended to read:

30.85.090 Citation.

- (1) Violations of the following provisions of Snohomish County Code shall be subject to the citation and/or criminal provisions set forth in this chapter:
 - (a) Junkyard conditions in urban zones (SCC 30.22.100 or SCC 30.65.285);
 - (b) Recreational vehicle occupancy (SCC 30.22.100, 30.22.110, 30.22.120 or
- 30.22.130(19)(b) and (c) or SCC 30.65.285);
 - (((c) Tree retention (SCC 30.25.016(1))) (((d))) (c) Illegal signs (chapter 30.27 SCC);
- (((e))) (d) Noise standards (chapter 10.01 SCC, except public disturbance noises as defined by SCC 10.01.040);
- (((f))) (e) Fence height (SCC 30.52A.148(1)(c) or SCC 30.23.100(3));
 - (((a))) (f) Erosion control measures and best management practices (chapter 30.63A SCC);
- 47 (((h))) (g) Overcrowding beyond building capacity or blocking means of egress (SCC 48 30.53A.382);
 - (((++))) (h) Obstruction of fire apparatus access roads (SCC 30.53A.512);
 - ((((i))) (i) Means of egress (SCC 30.53A.010, Section 1028 IFC);
 - (((k))) (j) Burn permit (SCC 30.53A.298);

Erosion control measures Chapter 30.63A SCC	\$150	\$250	\$300	\$500	\$500	\$700
Overcrowding building or egress SCC 30.53A.382	NA	\$250	NA	\$500	\$500	\$700
Obstruction of fire access roads SCC 30.53A.512	\$150	\$250	\$300	\$500	\$500	\$700
Means of egress SCC 30.53A.010; Section 1028 IFC	NA	\$250	NA ·	\$500 .	\$500	\$700
Burn permit SCC 30.53A.298	\$150	\$250	\$300	\$500	\$500	\$700
Stop work order SCC 30.85.230	\$300	\$500	\$600	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,500
Emergency order SCC 30.85.240	\$450	\$750	\$500	\$1,500	\$700	\$2,100

¹ See SCC 30.85.135 as definition

((*Code Reviser-Note: The text shown in 30.85.130 footnote 3 above, in italic font, was added by Amended Ord. 08-101 but was not shown with addition marks.))

Section 16. Severability and Savings. If any section, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance shall be held to be invalid by the Growth Management Hearings Board (Board), or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the validity or constitutionality of any other section, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance. Provided, however, that if any section, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance is held to be invalid by the Board or court of competent jurisdiction, then the section, sentence, clause or phrase in effect prior to the effective date of this ordinance shall be in full force and effect for that individual section, sentence, clause or phrase as if this ordinance had never been adopted.

PASSED this 8th day of October, 2014.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL Snohomish County, Washington

Dave Somers, Council Chair

Debbie Eco. Clerk of the Council

² Pursuant to SCC 30.85.280.

⁽⁽³ If the trees removed constitute no more than the lesser of 5 significant trees or 5% of the total number of significant trees on the site the fine shall be \$1,000 per tree.*))